

## Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-05 LAB-04

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 L-02 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /067 W

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R 051652Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8528

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 16919

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IT

SUBJECT: BIG TURNOUT IN NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE

REF: ROME'S 16309

1. BEGAIN SUMMARY. MILLIONS OF ITALIAN WORKERS -- CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN ON OTHER RECENT OCCASIONS -- PARTICIPATED IN THE EIGHT-HOUR NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE CALLED BY THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU) ON DECMEBER 4. LARGE CROWDS ATTENDED THE THREE MAJOR DEMONSTRATIONS IN NAPLES, TURN AND BOLOGNA. RADICAL LEFT HECKLERS IN NAPLES, OBJECTING TO HIS OBSTRUCTION OF LABOR UNITY, PREVENTED UIL SECRETARY GENERAL VANNI FROM DELIVERING HIS REMARKS AS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER. BOTH STORTI AND LAMA CALLED FOR EARLY MEETINGS WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO CONFRONT LABOR'S MOST INSISTENT DEMANDS: AUGMENTED WAGE ESCALATION PAYMENTS, PENSION REFORM, AND PRICE CONTROLS. END SUMMARY.

2. YESTERDAY'S EIGHT HOUR NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE EVOKED SUBSTANTIAL RESPONSE FROM INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND THOSE IN THE LARGER COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS. AT FIAT, TOO, THE TURNOUT WAS EVIDENTLY CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN DURING THE RECENT  
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SHORTER GENERAL STRIKES. THE THREE MAJOR DEMONSTRATIONS IN TURIN,

BOLOGNA AND NAPLES DREW VERY LARGE CROWDS. IN NAPLES, UIL SECRETARY GENERAL VANNI WAS MET WITH MASSIVE INTERFERENCE IN THE FORM OF SHOUTS, HECKLING AND THE THROWING OF OBJECTS. DESPITE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS BY CGIL OFFICIALS AND OTHERS TO CALM THE RADICALS, VANNI WAS UNABLE TO COMPLETE HIS REMARKS. THE MANIFESTATION, EMANATING FROM RADICAL, EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS, WAS BASED ON VANNI'S OPPOSITION TO FURTHER ADVANCES TOWARD ORGANIC UNITY OF THE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT. THROUGH LAMA AND STORTI WERE EVIDENTLY NOT DISTURBED, POLICE HAD TO QUELL MINOR INCIDENTS IN BOTH TURIN AND BOLOGNA FOLLOWING THEIR REMARKS.

3. THE DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOR'S "AUTUMN CAMPAIGN" WERE FEATURED IN THE REMARKS DELIVERED BY CGIL CHIEF LAMA IN TURIN AND CISL HEAD STORTI IN BOLOGNA. LAMA PRAISED THE FIAT AGREEMENT (ROME'S A-747) WHICH, HE SAID, AUGURED WELL FOR THE SOLUTION OF LABOR'S MAJOR DEMAND, THE INCREASE IN WAGE ESCALATION RATES. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THIS COULD BE RESOLVED BY CHRISTMAS, BUT IF NOT, LABOR COULD AGAIN UTILIZE ITS "WEAPONS OF STRUGGLE." HE SAID PRIME MINISTER MORO'S PROGRAM WAS UNSATISFACTORY TO LABOR IN "SEVERAL IMPORTANT POINTS," ADDING THAT THE UNIONS WILL BE CONFRONTING THE GOVERNMENT ON SUCH SPECIFIC ISSUES AS PENSIONS AND PRICES "AND NOT ON ABSTRACT STRATEGIES." STORTI EMPHASIZED THAT THE STRIKE WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT "WITH WHOM WE INTEND RAPIDLY TO CON- FRONT THE MOST URGENT ISSUES. STORTI ALSO CALLED FOR STEPS TO BE TAKEN TOWARD LABOR UNITY AT THE NEXT SESSION (DECEMBER 10) OF THE CCU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

4. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE CAUSE TO WHICH THE LARGE STRIKE TURNOUT -- REVERSING RECENT TRENDS -- IS TO BE ATTRIBUTED. OUR UNION SOURCES OFFER THE ODD, BUT PERHAPS VALID, EXPLANATION THAT THE HIGH (80 PERCENT ) PARTICIPATION AT FIAT, WHERE 65,000 WORKERS HAD JUST RETURNED TO A FULL WORK-WEEK, WAS AN EXPRESSION OF WORKER HAPPINESS WITH THEIR UNIONS FOR RESOLVING THE FIAT DISPUTE. IN ANY EVENT, DESPITE THE DISCLAIMERS OF STORTI AND OTHERS, IT WAS NOT A PARTICULARLY AUSPICIOUS INAUGURAL GIFT TO THE NEW, NOT-YET-CONFIRMED MORO GOVERNMENT. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO NOTE VANNI'S REACTION TO HIS RUDE RECEPTION IN NAPLES, WHETHER IT STRENGTHENS HIS RESOLVE TO  
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COMBAT THE COMMUNIZATION OF THE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT, OR WHETHER HE REVERSES HIS FIELD. VOLPE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** LABOR STRIKES, LABOR OBJECTIVES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 05 DEC 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974ROME16919  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740353-0868  
**From:** ROME  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 109  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** ROME'S 16309  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 APR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <15-Aug-2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BIG TURNOUT IN NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE  
**TAGS:** PINT, ELAB, IT, CCU  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005